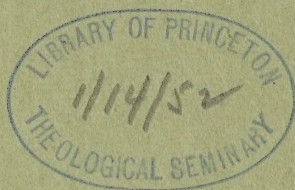


The Presbyterian Church
in the U.S.A.

Christian Faith and Life
A Program for Church and Home

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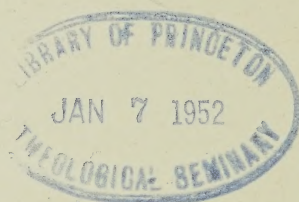
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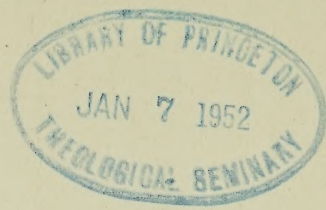
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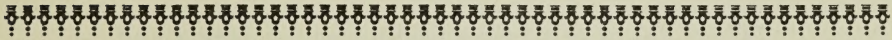


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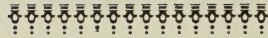
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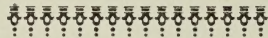
A PROGRAM FOR CHURCH AND HOME

Approved by
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
The Presbyterian Church
in the United States of America
May 26, 1947
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Board of Christian Education of the
Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.



THE Board of Christian Education on May 1 and 2, 1946, adopted the basic principles for the new graded curriculum which are found on the following pages. This new course of study will be introduced to the Church between January and October, 1948, and will be available for use in Church Schools beginning October, 1948, replacing at that time the graded series now entitled "Graded Bible Lessons for These Times."



PART I.

Principles

I. WHY CHRISTIAN EDUCATION?

The Christian faith is known only by revelation; yet equally true is it that we should know nothing of the Christian faith today had it not been for a human channel of communication. We believe in God as the Father Almighty; we know Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour; we know the living presence of God in the Holy Spirit; our sins are forgiven and we are bound together into the Church of God; we have hope of life everlasting, only because God so revealed himself to the prophets and apostles and through their witness continues to reveal himself to us today. Everything in the Christian faith and Christian life depends completely upon this revelation. Yet what was known of God by prophets and apostles would never have passed to others and would never have reached us had it not been for a very human process. It belongs to the very nature of faith both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament that it must be communicated from person to person. That is and has always been God's way of working. In the heart and life of one man He brings to birth a faith in Him and an understanding of His will in order that through one man faith and understanding may be awakened in many.

We see this interrelatedness of revelation and communication in Jesus' dealing with his disciples. Patiently he taught them and in intimate converse with them let them enter as fully as possible into the meaning of his message, his mission, and his person. Then, in this close relationship of disciples to a teacher, God finally took away their blindness and revealed Jesus to them as the Christ. The teacher was known as no mere teacher but actually the Lord of all life, and the disciples found their life's fulfillment in unreserved devotion to him. Teaching and revelation were thus so interwoven in Jesus' relationship with his disciples that no hard-and-fast line between them can be drawn.

Jesus in his lifetime could reach only a small number of people. Yet his goal was the salvation of all mankind. Therefore he chose for himself disciples. The disciples in fellowship with Christ were made sharers of the very life that had come into the world in him, a life that centered no longer in self but in God. They were taken into a new world under God's rule, in which all things in their experience received a new meaning. But the life that came to them in Christ was by its nature not for them alone. It was for all men, and through them it had to go at once to all men. Their commission was to bear witness to Christ by word and deed, and their confidence was that, if they bore faithful witness, others could find in Christ the same glad new life which had come to

them. Christ had ever afresh to be revealed to men as their Saviour and Lord, yet nothing could be known of him unless there were disciples to point to him and to tell the story of what he had done for them.

The same interdependence of divine revelation and human communication is to be traced all through the Old Testament. God opened the ear of a Jeremiah to his word so that Jeremiah knew him and understood his purposes as others did not. Then as Jeremiah spoke in the name of God and declared God's will to the men of his time, some at least of those who heard him responded and came to know God as the prophet did. In Jeremiah's preaching they heard nothing less than the *revelation* of God himself, in which God spoke to them and claimed the devotion of their lives. God's way of reaching the many was to begin with one and to lay upon that one the responsibility of communicating to others what had come to him.

It is against this background that Christian education must be understood. It is one of the forms of Christian communication. It is evident therefore that revelation and education are not two unrelated things; yet the one cannot ever be substituted for the other. He who thinks to magnify revelation by scorning education is ignorant of how God has chosen ever to widen the circle of those who know and love and serve him on earth. On the other hand, when education cuts itself loose from revelation, as though it were something independent of it, very speedily that which is communicated through the educational process becomes something less or other than the life and truth which are known only in Jesus Christ. There is no true knowledge of God and no true understanding of any aspect of human life except as it is revealed in Jesus Christ. But that truth cannot reach the world in its need—it cannot reach even good Church members in their need—unless there are persons in whom Christ so lives that through them he can make himself known to others. Such persons are in the highest sense teachers, communicating by word and by action not merely a system of ideas or code of conduct but the very life which has become theirs in Christ. Perhaps it would be truer, however, to say that it is communicated through them than that they communicate it, for, whatever man may do and however convincing his testimony to Christ, it is only the working of God's Spirit in and through the teaching that can make Christ known as Lord and can unfold the infinite riches of life in fellowship with God. Christian teaching and Christian revelation can at no point be allowed to go apart from each other.

When the interworking of revelation and teaching in God's purpose is thus seen, it is at once apparent how serious is any neglect by the Church of its educational responsibility. It is not to be considered as merely neglect of one detail in the Church's life or of one particular organization among the many organizations of the present-day congregation. It is nothing less than an ignoring of God's purpose and an unwillingness to co-operate in his plan for the salvation of the world. It is a refusal to put at God's disposal the means whereby his grace operates, the human agencies through which he has chosen to bring men to a knowledge of his mercy and truth. God preserves a witness to himself in spite of man's unfaithfulness; yet the reality must be faced that, whenever these human means and agencies are allowed to fail, God ceases to

be known; his mercy is hidden and men destroy themselves in the despair of their sin; faith becomes confused and the love of Christ no longer constrains men. God's revelation becomes of no avail where he fails to find persons who will let themselves be used as channels through which he may reach other persons.

Herein then lies the necessity and the importance of Christian education, that even as we ourselves would have no knowledge of the Christian Gospel had we not learned of it from others, so the present and future generations will remain ignorant of it unless Christian people accept the responsibility of Christian teaching.

II. WHOSE TASK?

When the necessity for Christian education is properly understood and it is seen as the providing of the indispensable human channel through which God's grace and truth may reach all men, at once it is evident that education of this kind is a function of the Church as a whole. It cannot be delegated by the Church to a few of its members and then forgotten by the others. The responsibility is not adequately met merely by the provision of an ordained ministry and the institution of a Church School for the instruction of children and youth. Rather, the Church in its entirety must bear this responsibility of being the human means through which the true knowledge of God and all that flows from that knowledge may reach ever farther into the life of the world. It must begin with the children and youth of its own Christian families, and with its own members, but it must have before it constantly the question of how the Gospel is to be carried beyond the walls of the Church to the world in its dire need. So essential and so central is this educational responsibility to the very nature of the Gospel and of the Church that no one can be truly a Christian and evade the burden of it. The Church is only then true to its nature and calling when it is a teaching Church, a fellowship of believers living gladly by the faith which it has received from Christ and seeking in every possible way to share it with others.

All this roots in the fact that the Church is called to be the body of Christ. That means that it offers itself to him as a human body which he may indwell and through which he may actually live and speak and act. But that he makes it his body is ever an act of grace which can never be taken for granted. Just as the reconciling of men to God was the central purpose of Jesus' life, so, in so far as he dwells in his Church, it has committed to it in each new age the ministry of reconciliation. But it is not likely to fulfill a ministry of reconciliation unless its approach to men is like that of Jesus himself. Jesus came teaching. Whether it was before crowds on the hillsides, by the lake, and in the synagogue, or in casual encounters with persons along the way, he was constantly teaching. Not merely by what he said, but often even more forcefully by what he did, he confronted men with the truth that was in him. He taught multitudes among whom were many who were indifferent or definitely hostile to him. At other times he spent hours in teaching the disciples who were closest to him, alone by themselves. Jesus' teaching was never a matter of merely intellectual instruction; rather it was characterized by being always an assault upon the inmost selves of men, pressing them to

choose between God and self. His teaching and his mission were one, for his unswerving purpose was the recovery of men to their only true life in fellowship with God and man. Thus it is useless to talk of the Church being the body of Christ unless the ministry of teaching, which is also the ministry of reconciliation, is as central to its life as it was to the earthly life of Jesus and as it was to the life of the apostolic Church.

The Christian fellowship has three major opportunities for bearing its witness and sharing its life with the younger generation—the regular worship of the congregation, the relationships within the Christian family, and the age-group organizations, at the center of which is the Church School. Each depends upon the others and is not likely to be effective by itself. All depend upon the character and quality of Christian faith and practice in the Church as a whole.

The worship of God in the Christian congregation, with the proclamation of the Word of God at its center, is primary and basic to the Church's whole work of teaching. The education of children and youth should lead them stage by stage into the fullest possible participation in the congregation's worship. The worship itself may be one of the most valuable situations for learning and should become a permanent institution in the lives of all.

The home is of major importance in the Christian education of children. In the sacrament of Baptism the Church lays upon the shoulders of parents the responsibility for the nurturing of their children in the Christian faith. The parents are appointed to and accept the position of Christian ministers to their own children. They may discharge this office faithfully or unfaithfully, but they cannot transfer the responsibility to anyone else. The unique opportunity of the home is that, in the intimacy of its life, guidance and instruction may be given at the very point and often at the very moment of need. There may be formal instruction, or the greater reliance may be upon informal guidance, whichever may prove most effective; but what is done in the home determines in a large measure, for good or for ill, the religious development of the child.

The educational activities which center in the Church School should not be a substitute either for the worship of the congregation or for the function of the parent, but should provide consistent Christian training under specially competent direction. They should constitute in a very special sense the school of the Church, furnishing opportunities for carefully graded progress in learning, and having before them always as their goal the most thorough training and equipment of Christian disciples.

The fact must not be lost from sight, however, that the Church's most intimate contact with the world of unbelief in all its need is in the chance situations of everyday life when the individual Christian must both speak and act on behalf of his faith. There the Church must be prepared, not only to stand its ground, but to reach out aggressively in the name of Christ. Therefore, Christians who are neither parents nor Church School teachers have a definite responsibility to be, in the most informal yet vital way, teachers of the Christian faith to the world. They also form the Christian community which touches the lives of children and youth in innumerable ways—contacts which, though momentary, may be of profound and lasting influence in the development of the persons concerned. The Christian faith becomes credible

to children and to inquirers only when it is seen actually in operation in the lives of members of the Christian community. The teaching is rendered incredible when the principles that are operative in the actual life of the Church and of Christian people are obviously in contradiction to those that have been professed in formal courses of instruction. Thus no Christian can avoid participation in the teaching Church, for he is part of a community which is constantly teaching, not only by what it says, but by what it is and what it does.

III. TO WHAT END?

A truly Christian educational program for children and youth has as its comprehensive goal that they may grow up in the most definite way into the full life and faith of the Church of Jesus Christ. It is not sufficient merely that they become members of the Church of their community and conform to the existing order in it. Rather, the hope is that in them the purpose of Christ will be realized with such earnestness and forthrightness that they will be a leaven in their Church, ever afresh, bringing to it renewal of life and restoration of its true nature. Growing up into the life of the Church will mean that they enter, step by step, into that life which the Church has with God in worship, and into that fellowship which Christians have with each other because of their oneness in Christ. It will also mean that the historic faith of the Church will become their personal faith by which they live day by day, and that, because of the faith that possesses them, they will commit themselves decisively to the life of active discipleship which Christ expects of all who call themselves his followers. As disciples they will seek constantly to know God's will and to do it in relation to the issues of life in the local, national, and international communities, and they will be aware that to come under God's rule now is to have citizenship in a Kingdom which is eternal. From the lowest grades to the highest, all units of a curriculum should be pointed definitely toward the realization of this goal.

This definition of the goal of Christian education assumes that there can be only one standard of what constitutes a Christian. The toleration or encouragement of two standards—one for so-called "ordinary" Christians, from whom no more is expected than a conformity of faith, a decent level of morals, and some measure of support to the Church, but quite another for those who take their discipleship seriously—results in a loss of the sense of mission in the rank and file of the Church. The New Testament picture of what Christian faith and discipleship mean is dismissed as impossible and impractical for any ordinary person in the twentieth century and is regarded as the prerogative of a few specially endowed persons. The Church thus becomes more interested in its own preservation as a fine "moral and spiritual" institution than in fulfilling Christ's own mission which is both the world's judgment and its only effective salvation. With the loss of the sense of personal mission in the individual Christian, the very foundation of the world mission of the Church is destroyed. It is therefore essential that at every stage it should be made plain that to be a Christian is to enter upon a life of personal discipleship in the fellowship of Christ's Church. No one should be encouraged to think himself a Christian on any easier terms than those laid down by our Lord

himself. One may reject the invitation to discipleship, but one ought not to think he can change the terms of it to suit his own convenience.

It is not sufficient to conceive the goal of Christian education in terms of character. A true Christian faith, true worship, renunciation of self in order to find life in the Christian fellowship, and the acceptance of responsibility for sharing the Christian faith with others, all have their fruits in the development of distinctive qualities of Christian character. But when attention is concentrated primarily upon character development, there is a tendency for Christian education to become purely moralistic, neglecting the deeper aspects of Christian faith. It produces then, in the main, good religious people with an inclination toward complacency about their own goodness and religiousness but with little inclination toward those disciplines which are necessary for able, intelligent, and aggressive Christian discipleship. It must be recognized that men who possess many excellent qualities of character, such as honesty, charitableness, faithfulness, and industry, may yet be quite unwilling to be in any real sense members of the body of Christ through which he continues his saving work among men. They may be intensely loyal to the Church as a part of their heritage and as a valuable community institution and yet relatively unconcerned about that for which Christ founded his Church and gave his life, the evangelization of the world. Christian education, therefore, interprets Christian character wholly in terms of the Gospel with its emphasis upon sin and redemption, and seeks that there may be shaped in persons today the same mind and spirit, the same response to God and man, and the same outlook upon life which Jesus sought to bring to birth in his first disciples.

The goal of Christian education being so defined, certain guiding principles for the construction of curriculum are at once evident. At each age level there must be units that will lead children and young people into intelligent participation in the worship of the Church. Then, beginning with the family as a unit of the Christian fellowship, there should be an unfolding of ever wider perspectives until one knows himself a member of a mighty community of faith which circles the earth and binds the Church of the ages into one. Here Church history holds a large place. Equally important is it that from the very beginning the faith of the Church should be even in the simplest way the faith of the child. He is baptized into that faith, and through his parents God begins in him his work of grace long before he is capable of understanding or conscious decision. At each age level he should be led into an ever deeper understanding of the meaning of the Christian faith in relation to the actual conduct of life at that level. Doctrinal incoherence should be recognized at every stage as the cause, not only of confusion of faith, but of a consequent paralysis of life.

Those under the Church's care must be so rooted and grounded in the full Christian faith and must so understand it that they shall be prepared both to withstand anti-Christian faiths and to bear convincing and intelligent witness to their own faith. The all-inclusive principle of training for active discipleship will not be adequately provided for by occasional units in the curriculum, but must govern constantly the approach to the total work of teaching.

IV. WHAT SHALL WE TEACH?

The content of the Church's teaching is determined always in the light of two considerations. On the one hand, the essential content has been given once and for all in God's revelation of himself in the Scriptures. The word which the prophets and the apostles heard and spoke and which for them had in it the decisive truth concerning the whole of life is the word which the Christian teacher must hear and speak today. The Church has no choice in the matter; its commission is not to teach anything and everything that it may find interesting or valuable in human life, but specifically to teach the Gospel. All Christian teaching must be measured by the standard: Is there to be heard in it the same message of God which is the center and heart of the Scriptures? On the other hand, everything that is said and done by the Church in teaching must proceed from a sympathetic understanding of the particular situation and needs of those who are to be taught. It must be characterized, not by abstraction and generalities, but by pertinence to the actual problems and issues of life. It is not enough for the pupil to hear that God once spoke and once redeemed his people and once pardoned sinners and transformed their lives. He must hear God speaking to him today through the teaching of the Church, and it must be for him immediately true that God redeems his people, that God pardons sinners, that life can be transformed by God's grace.

Two major errors have been made in recent years concerning the content of the Church's teaching, each seizing upon half of the truth and treating it as though it were the whole truth. One viewpoint is based soundly upon the importance of the Bible and Christian doctrine in all teaching, but it proceeds as though all that is necessary is to communicate a body of information concerning the Bible and doctrine. The assumption is that there is a body of objective Christian knowledge which needs only to be conveyed to another person in order to make him more Christian. Learning is thus conceived as a mere storing in the mind of information. There is indeed a very real place in the curriculum for the learning of facts—about the Bible, about Jesus Christ, about the history of the Church, about the world in which the Christian has to live—for right thinking is impossible if a person is without the facts or has a distorted or inaccurate knowledge of them. But it must be recognized that even where there is the completest knowledge of the facts there may at the same time be the completest ignorance of God or denial of God. The content of the curriculum is not information but a Person, Jesus Christ, and the information is valid only in so far as through it he becomes known to man in his need today.

The second error arises by way of reaction from the first. Too often the pupil has been placed at the center as though the content of the teaching can be determined by examining the needs and problems of the pupil. He is to be taught whatever will promote his healthy growth as a person toward mastery of his life situation. The self-development of the pupil thus becomes the organizing principle and the goal of the process. But as Christians we know that the true needs and problems of life can be seen only in the light of the Gospel. We have no right understanding of our human situation until in

Christ there is unveiled to us both the extremity of our need and the adequacy of the remedy which God has supplied. Also, the overconcentration upon the pupil to the neglect of the Gospel and the Church results in a development that moves ever farther away from the Christian faith in the direction of a general cultural ideal. We do not find the answer to the need of man or child by even the most carefully scientific examination and analysis of the need. The answer is always found elsewhere, and unless it has its source in the Gospel it is likely to be something other than the Christian answer.

What the Church teaches abides always the same, and yet it is no contradiction to say that it changes with every shifting situation of life. What God claims from man, what he proposes for him, what he expects of him, what he offers to him, is always the same, but man is never twice at the same point in his understanding and response in relation to God. Therefore there is bound to be an infinite variety of approach in a teaching which takes the human situation in earnest, and a constant freshness and newness, while at the same time it will have a consistency which is a reflection of the consistency of God's truth and justice and love.

There can be no right understanding of Christian teaching, however, without the recognition that it is God who teaches, guides, enlightens and redeems, and that all our human endeavors are secondary and conditional upon his activity. To put it most strongly, that which we are commanded as Christians to teach we are unable of ourselves to teach successfully to anyone, regardless of how correct our understanding may be or how wise our methods. All right teaching begins, continues, and ends with an acknowledgment that no person is rightly taught in the things of faith until in a real and personal sense he is taught of God. The knowledge of God is not a subject matter that is at our disposal, to be controlled and communicated by us as we see fit. That God is known is ever afresh an act of his grace and love whereby he himself comes today to be the God of those who are willing to receive him in repentance and faith. Therefore we must teach always with a consciousness of the limitation that is upon all that we do. We cannot of ourselves and out of our own resources communicate to others a truly Christian faith and life; we can at most be instruments through which persons are led to the place where God meets with men, takes away their blindness, and redeems them into fellowship with himself.

What shall we teach? We receive the answer only as we stand with heart and mind open on the one side to the revelation of God in the Scriptures and on the other to the fullest possible understanding of those to whom we minister.

PART 2.

Practice

In the light of the principles that have been asserted, certain criticisms of present-day conditions in Christian education must be made and some indication given of how the principles are to issue in practice. The four sections are parallel to the four chapters in the statement of basic principles.

I. THE STATUS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

1. Christian education cannot be separated from the full life of the Church at any point without in some measure losing its true nature and significance. Yet very widely in the thinking and practice of the Church today such a separation is made. The office of preaching and the office of teaching, instead of being recognized as two closely related aspects of a single function of the Church, are allowed to drift apart, the former being held in highest honor and the latter being allowed to sink into a place of very low esteem. In consonance with this many ministers regard themselves solely as preachers and pastors and accept little responsibility for leadership in helping their congregations to be effective agencies of Christian teaching. They give to those who undertake the responsibility of teaching no sense of sharing with them in a common task. Neither do they make available to them the resources which they possess through special training for the ministry, by which teachers might become much more thoroughly equipped for their task. A similar divergence is evident in the fact that for the training of those who are to serve full time in Christian teaching there have been different schools and quite different curriculums provided than for those who are to be preachers and pastors. If Christian teaching is to find its proper place in the Church, the severity of this division must be overcome and all agencies through which the Church seeks to communicate the Christian faith to others must realize their oneness in a common task. One immediate consequence of this should be to cause the office of teacher in the Christian congregation to be taken with far greater seriousness and to be held in much higher honor.

2. The Christian education of children and youth is not regarded by most congregations as a major responsibility. It is customary for Church Schools to be financed by the children's contributions, and the equipment and educational materials to be limited by the small funds available. Conditions and tools for learning are imposed upon the Church School that parents would not tolerate in the secular education of their children. No grade-school teacher would ever be required to teach a course in geography or history with the materials both for herself and for her pupils in pamphlet form and with only three months of the course available at any one time. If it be granted that the Christian education of children is of major importance in their lives, then such conditions ought not to be tolerated.

A causal connection can plainly be seen between the inadequate provision for Christian education and the widespread religious illiteracy in Christian circles. Ignorance of the Bible, of the essentials of the Christian faith, and of the history of the Church is common even among those who have attended Church School for many years. It is a very serious matter for the Church that, in a time when the younger generation is beset on every side by unchristian or anti-Christian philosophies of life, uncertainty, triviality, confusion, and incoherence characterize so much of the education that is offered in the name of the Church.

With the launching of the new curriculum, congregations are called upon to recognize Christian education as the major responsibility which it is and to make provision for it commensurate with its importance. Educational

materials are being prepared which are of a character and quality that compare favorably with those used in secular education. By means of a reading book on the main theme of each year's study, both teacher and pupil are enabled to see the course as a whole. The reading books gradually build up for each pupil a library of Christian literature constantly available for reference. For class periods, workbooks and activity materials are provided for all children until they reach the senior department. A radical change of this kind in the character of our educational materials is at least one step toward an adequate educational policy. Since such materials are necessarily more expensive than those used in the past, the adoption of them will depend upon local congregations' recognizing how critical the educational problem is for their future existence and how imperative it is that a fresh approach of this kind to the task should be made.

II. WHERE THE RESPONSIBILITY RESTS

1. The publication of a new set of educational materials and the planning of a new course of instruction must be accompanied by an awakening of the Church to become in the truest sense a teaching Church. Books are effective only as instruments in the hands of teachers in whose hearts and lives the Christian faith has come alive. The critical need of our day cannot be met merely by the preparation of a new curriculum, but only by a Church that is humble enough to confess that it has neglected the teaching office and is willing to submit itself to the disciplines through which teachers are made.

It is fitting therefore that the introduction of the new curriculum should be prefaced and accompanied by an intensive program of teacher-training. In line with this also is the provision in each age group of a teacher's magazine, which will contain not only the program for Sunday by Sunday teaching but a consistent plan for the enrichment and development of the capacities of the teacher. This co-ordination of general teacher-training with preparation for the immediate task rests upon the principle that nowhere does one acquire general training more readily than at the point where the demands of a specific teaching assignment have shown the need for wider knowledge.

2. A recognition by Christians of their responsibility to bear witness to their faith whenever occasion arises would result in a very definite widening of the age limits within which Christian education is regarded as necessary. It is unfortunate that at present comparatively few Christians engage in any systematic study of their faith after the age of sixteen. At the very time when the basic questions of life are becoming most acute and when the major decisions of life are to be made, young people develop the attitude that they are too old for Christian schooling. The process of learning is thus just reaching its most interesting and vital stage when it is terminated. This attitude is a product of the all-too-common point of view that Christian education is exclusively for children. The practice of most Christian adults lends validity to that idea. Thus, in a day when earlier and yet earlier in their teens youths consider themselves to be adults, the exodus from Church School in intermediate and senior departments assumes serious proportions. The only cure for this condition is for Christian education to become established in the

mind of the Church as a lifelong process which no one who takes his Christian responsibility in earnest ever outgrows. The provision of adequate literature for adults who wish to study either in groups or privately is one of the urgent tasks that must have attention in the immediate future.

3. There is need of a much higher sense among teachers that they teach in the name of the Church and that their teaching should be worthy of the Church. There is no room in Christian education for unbridled individualism. The teacher is not a free lance, free to pass on to his pupils whatever may chance at the moment to interest him. Rather he is "a man under orders" and with a very definite commission. His function is not to impart merely the few fragments of wisdom which he has garnered along the way of life but to bring forth from the storehouse of the Church's wisdom, which is the Gospel, things new and old. The apostles found opportunity for the expression of their individuality, yet they were commissioned to teach, not each one a gospel of his own suited to his liking, but all alike the Gospel which they had received from their Lord.

4. There should be care exercised by the Christian congregation that the teaching done on its behalf may be worthy of it. Sometimes the most responsible authorities in a congregation are unaware of what is being taught or even what quality of educational materials are being used in their Church School. Sometimes materials from widely different sources are used in different departments with no integrated plan for the progress of the pupil. There may even be widely divergent gospels taught within a single school without any attempt to resolve the contradictions. Such conditions as these account for some at least of the confusion of mind which exists within the Church on essential questions of faith. It should be the responsibility of the staff of a Church School to bring clearly into the open what is being taught in the whole range of instruction and to consider with frankness, open-mindedness, and charity its adequacy or inadequacy in the light of the Gospel.

5. Evangelism should not be something added to Christian teaching but should belong to the very nature of the teaching itself. Teaching to which evangelism must be added as an extra is seriously defective. Christian truth, if it be rightly taught, always lays claim to the allegiance of the person taught and confronts him with decision. It is when the teaching is regarded as merely an informing of the mind that the need is felt for an additional appeal on an emotional level. If, however, it be truly the good news of the Gospel which is presented in teaching, God will lay claim upon the whole person through it, making persistently his appeal to the heart, mind, and will.

6. Of the three agencies of the Church that bear the chief responsibility for Christian teaching, only one is being used to any great extent today. The Christian parent has turned over his responsibility to the Church School and behaves often as though the solemn vows of the baptismal service were no longer binding. Then the Church School has come to be regarded by many as a substitute, so far as children are concerned, for the regular worship of the Church, so that few members of the Church School are present consistently for worship. Thus two major agencies of Christian education are rendered

inoperative, and an impossible burden is placed upon the Church School. Decisive action at both these points is necessary without delay.

The new curriculum plans definitely for the reinstatement of the home and of the service of worship as active factors in the education of children and youth. In the past most curriculums have been planned mainly with a teacher-pupil relationship in mind. The new curriculum intends to draw the parent very definitely into the picture. The beginners and primary children will have Christian storybooks, to be read to them by their parents. The reading books for juniors, intermediates, and seniors are to be of such a nature that they may well attract the interest of the parents and acquaint them with the basic content of the current study. The teacher's magazines for the various departments are to be planned for both teachers and parents, and the widest possible distribution of them among parents will be attempted.

The curriculum is also planned from earliest years to build the child intelligently into the worship and fellowship of the Church. Practices in Church School that encourage children to think of it as a substitute for Church worship are to be discouraged. The Church School is to be given more definitely the character of a school, a place where disciplined and closely integrated learning is expected. In the intermediate department, which is the age level at which many young people enter upon full membership in the Church, the curriculum for the three years will have as its constant concern the preparation of pupils to take their place in the Christian congregation and the Christian community.

III. THE CHRISTIAN OBJECTIVE

1. The question of the goal upon which Christian education is to be focused is of decisive importance today. Far too often the Church School fails to give the impression, either to those within or to those without, that anything very important is happening in it. Children and young people are being "held" for the Church by a special organization of their own. They are being brought under good influences which, it is hoped, will result in their becoming better men and women than they would otherwise be. They are expected, when they are old enough, to become Church members who regularly attend and support the Church. These aims are not wrong, but they are grossly inadequate. They are not likely to result in an educational program that is either strenuous or exciting. If, however, the goal that Christian education sets for itself be that every Christian may be an active disciple, and discipleship be defined by what it meant to be a Christian in New Testament times, the program is likely to claim of each person who is engaged in it the utmost that he can give.

It must be considered in what measure the deficient aims of Christian education have resulted in the Church of our day having in it so many people who morally and spiritually are of a superior character but through whom the Christian Gospel makes little or no impression upon the surrounding world. They have received moral and spiritual training, but it has never occurred to them that through them the very mission of Christ might find its continuation. That through them the Gospel should be preached to the poor and men in

slavery be set free, that in them should dwell a power which would make the powers of evil tremble in their strongholds, that by their witness to Christ men who are being destroyed by their sin should find pardon and a new life, is to them unthinkable. For such tasks they have not been prepared by their education. A Church School that takes with complete earnestness the preparation of Christian youth for active and courageous discipleship of this kind is not likely to give the impression of being an enterprise of minor importance.

2. The defining of the goal in Christian education is of great significance also for the missionary enterprise. A Church of disciples, committed definitely to the carrying forward of Christ's mission in a world that is still largely pagan, will of necessity be missionary in its nature both in the local community and in the world at large. Its members will regard it as axiomatic that a Church which is not an active aggressive mission has ceased to be Christian. This can mean the undergirding of the whole work of missions for the future. In recent years there has been a serious decline in the interest of Church members in world-wide missions. This decline may be traced largely to the prevalence of a double standard of what it means to be a Christian—that the basic thing is the attainment in the individual of a measure of moral and spiritual development and that to this may or may not be added an interest in active discipleship and in missions. This double standard has been encouraged by an emphasis upon Christian character in which there has been no clear indication that character which is Christian is committed to share unceasingly with others the benefits which have come from Christ. Christian education which insists thus upon the missionary responsibility of every Christian is likely to result in an awakening of congregations to their opportunity for exercising a mission in relation to the non-Christian community at their very doors.

3. Church history must occupy a large place in the curriculum if there is to be breadth and depth in the Churchmanship which Christian education develops. The total absence of Church history from the teaching program of many Church Schools leaves the pupil with a narrow, vague, and superficial understanding of the Church of which he has become a part. When all that has happened between Biblical times and today is ignored, the events that the Bible narrates seem to belong to a world that is completely cut off from the world in which we live. Not knowing or inadequately understanding the story of the Reformation, Protestants are unaware of the real foundations of Protestantism. Not knowing the history of the various branches of the Protestant Church, people fall a prey either to denominational narrowness or to an unfortunate repudiation of their denomination's heritage.

The opening up of the experience of the Church through the ages will do much to set the Church of the present day in its proper perspective and to illuminate the problems and issues of its life. The successes and failures of Christians in the past will help to make plain the Christian way for the Church of the present. To this end pupils should be encouraged to recognize where the Church has been most faithful to its nature and destiny in the past and where it has let itself be drawn aside from its true purpose. The

standard by which it is to be judged is none other than Jesus Christ himself, in whom the true calling of the Church stands revealed. Only a Church that is unafraid to confess its past sins is likely to be delivered from those sins in the future, and only a Church that rejoices in its triumphs in the past is likely to go forward to greater triumphs in the future.

4. The life into which Christian education seeks to lead persons is not a life apart from the world; rather, it must be realized in the commonplace situations of the everyday order. The Church does not exist in a vacuum, but in a complex of relationships and realities—economic, political, social, intellectual. It is characteristic of Scriptural doctrine that God's sovereignty extends through all areas of life and none of it can be held apart from his rule. Thus, to respond in faith to God is to acknowledge his authority and the necessity for obedience to his will in all areas of life without exception. To be a Christian believer involves not merely the mind and heart but the entire conduct of life. Therefore in Christian teaching there must be a constant focusing of attention upon the actual situations in which Christians have to live out their faith. It is not sufficient to teach general principles without clear indication of how the principles are likely to issue in practice. Faith and conduct are inseparable.

It is at this point that Christian teaching becomes most difficult and dangerous, for it requires decisions concerning things in which men's interests, loyalties, and prejudices are closely involved. Yet if it shrinks from the responsibility, it becomes irrelevant and uninteresting. Timidity in this regard is responsible for the failure of the Church to exert decisive influence in many important departments of life today. Therefore Christian teaching must be specific and uncompromising in tracing out the implications of Christian faith for practical life.

5. In recent years there has been a tendency in Christian education, as in Christian preaching, to concentrate upon the immediate situations of life and to say little concerning the Christian's triumph over death and his inheritance in Christ of life eternal. This has perhaps been a reaction against an unhealthy and essentially unscriptural preoccupation of some Christians with their own individual welfare in a future life. It is true, however, that the Christian teacher does not see the full import of his task until he is aware that upon the faithful discharge of his office may depend the welfare of his pupils not only in time but in eternity. Each decision of faith has eternal significance. Moreover, it is part of the Christian's peculiar readiness for life that he has entered through faith into Christ's victory over death!

IV. THE CONTENT OF CHRISTIAN TEACHING

1. Such terms as "content-centered," "Bible-centered," and "pupil-centered," which are used to classify various curriculums, cause things that belong together to be set in opposition to each other. All curriculums have theological content, the only question open to debate being the nature of such content. The simplest story for beginners has theological implications and belongs in some one theological context. Equally impossible is it for a Christian curriculum to give secondary importance to the Bible, for through it alone

can we gain firsthand knowledge of what it means to be Christian. No less important is the child in the curriculum, for the child must ever be in the midst, where Jesus placed him, and the whole of Christian education is a failure unless it actually bears fruit in the life of the child.

If one must speak of a center for curriculum, then it is truest to say that Christ is the center—Christ as we know him only through the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, Christ the eternal Word of God. But Christ is unwilling to be at the center alone. He takes the child into the center with him, so that no one can have him at the center without having the child there also. The child must be understood in the light of Christ's relationship to him and his relationship to Christ, never in isolation from Christ as though the nature of his needs and problems were self-evident.

2. One of the greatest problems in Christian teaching is that, while there is a great emphasis upon the Bible and attention to it in the Church School, few Christians seem to be able to read the Bible for themselves with understanding even after they have been fifteen years under the Church's instruction. In spite of the place which it still occupies in the affections of Christian people, of which the millions of copies purchased each year are evidence, there is reason to suspect that the Bible is almost a closed book so far as large areas of the Christian population are concerned. A number of factors have contributed to this condition. Much Bible-teaching has consisted merely of recital of facts and events as recorded in the Old and New Testaments without any clear indication of their importance for life today, thereby nourishing the conviction in young minds that the Bible is essentially irrelevant to modern life. There has been a fragmentariness often in the treatment accorded the Bible, only small excerpts being seen at any one time, the great unifying themes and the sweep of God's redemptive purpose which gives meaning to all the parts of the Bible being lost from sight. It is perhaps true also that often pupils have had merely a variety of lessons, each related at some point to a passage of Scripture, rather than a thorough training in the use of the Bible as a means of grace through which they may daily have fellowship with God and know his will for them. Another factor that contributes to the Bible's disuse is the failure of many teachers to profit from the vast labors of scholars in the past century through which light has been thrown upon the history of Bible times and the social and cultural background of the events, also upon the historical setting and general structure of the individual books. Bible-teaching which is not abreast of good scholarship may have the unfortunate result of making the Bible a book of intellectual problems instead of the Word of God for today. Yet other factors might be mentioned: the difficulty, which not only rank-and-file teachers but even the best scholars have, in getting at the real meaning of the text of Scripture today; the scarcity of books which with adequate scholarship enable the ordinary reader to find what God is really saying to him in the Scriptures; the widespread idea that a man can know most of what he needs to know of God quite apart from the Scriptures; the great difference between the ways of thinking found in the Scriptures and the most customary modern ways of thinking, which creates a feeling of strangeness and even antagonism. It can be seen, thus, that the problem of

making the Scriptures meaningful in Christian teaching is a complex one and will require a concentration of attention and concern if it is to be solved.

In the new curriculum certain steps are being taken that point toward a solution. In the reading books on the life of Christ, the Bible, and the Church, it will be possible to overcome the fragmentariness which has dogged the Bible teacher and to give due attention to the great central and unifying themes. The interrelatedness of the different parts of the Bible can be clearly shown. But, more important, the constant emphasis will be upon what God is saying through these records to one who has to face life today. A consistent aim will be to give the pupil a working knowledge of his Bible and an ability to read it for himself. The reading books will remain with him as guides to help him in difficulties he meets in Bible-reading in later days. Teaching that attempts no more than the conveying of Biblical information will be discouraged, the Bible being taught always in relation to the issues of life. The fullest possible use will be made of the results of Old and New Testament scholarship, in order to clarify for the teacher the human story of the Scriptures and to overcome misconceptions which might prove a barrier to a right understanding of the message.

3. The unique place that the Scriptures occupy in Christian teaching corresponds to the unique place that they occupy in Christian preaching. The ministry of teaching is a ministry of the Word. This was unchallenged in the life of the Church for centuries, but in modern times has been very widely set in question. The idea is widespread that so well may God and right be known from other sources than the Scriptures that the Scriptures should be accounted merely the most important among many agencies of revelation. Much, indeed, that is admirable has been written by men through the ages and in the literature of non-Christian faiths concerning religion and morals. But it still remains true that the Christian God, the God who is the Father Almighty, the God who has actually come into our flesh for our salvation in Jesus Christ, the God who in his Holy Spirit asks to be received to dwell enthroned at the center of our being, and the life which flows from faith in that God, would be unknown among men if it were not for the Scriptures. When the Scriptures cease to be understood, soon *that* God is no longer worshiped and *that* life is no longer known.

The Church in a very real sense derives its life from the Scriptures. When God's voice ceases to be heard through the Scriptures as the voice of Him who is sovereign, not only over the Church but also over the whole of life, there arises a confusion between what is the voice of God and what are the voices merely of human culture. The way is opened for the Church to be used as an instrument for supporting and propagating some phase of contemporary society or a national heritage or the general values of a civilization. Its educational program is then likely to be pointed toward adjusting children to the social order to which their elders belong, or encouraging national virtues, or promoting the interests of civilization in general. The peculiar purposes for which God chose for himself a people and for which Christ founded his Church are likely more and more to be forgotten, the Church becoming in the main a bulwark of society or of the nation or of civilization. A Church,

however, that acknowledges the prophets and apostles as its foundation and Jesus Christ is its chief Cornerstone, and uses the record of the Scriptures that it may be kept true to that foundation, cannot let itself be subordinated to any worldly interests. It serves all orders of society; it serves the nation; it serves civilization; but its life is determined, not by any of these, but solely by the commandment of Him to whom it belongs.

4. Thorough use should be made of every agency that will deliver Christian teaching from abstractions and generalities and bring it to bear directly upon the actual life of the child. Here the extensive researches in psychology and educational method which have been carried forward in recent years must be utilized. The fact that much of this work has proceeded from a humanistic rather than from a Christian philosophy of life makes some of its most dogmatic conclusions unacceptable, but that need not prevent much being learned concerning the working of the human mind and spirit at the various stages in the development of life. It is by God's ordering that the child is very different at different stages of his growth, and it is a sign of reverence before God and care for the child for us to have the most thorough and sympathetic understanding of him at each age level. It is true constantly that we cannot minister to children and youth unless we are willing to enter into their world and to meet them and speak to them where they are actually living.

"So then you are . . . fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit."

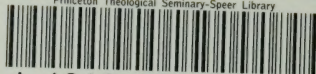
—*Eph. 2:19-22.*

"For no other foundation can any one lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."—*I Cor. 3:11.*

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